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Award-Winning Author to Discuss Her Powerful New Memoir About Recovery and Renewal in a Jail Cell After a Relapse into Alcohol Addiction

Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT) Presents an Inspiring Story of Redemption for the Jewish High Holidays



Santa Monica, CA (July 24, 2018) In the Jewish tradition, the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are known as the Days of Awe - a time to contemplate and repent the sins of the past year and to ask God to write our names in the Book of Life.

On Sunday, August 26, Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT) prepares for the Days of Awe with a "Bagels and Bestsellers" event featuring award-winning author Leslie Schwartz. Schwartz, whose novels have been translated into 13 languages and a motion picture (*Angels Crest*), has written a remarkable new memoir, *The Lost Chapters: Finding Recovery and Renewal One Book at a Time*. She will discuss her dramatic story of a descent into addiction and the surprising path to her recovery at The Braid, home of JWT. Tickets are \$20, including a light brunch and a book signing.

In 2014, after a 414-day relapse into alcohol addiction that followed more than a decade of sobriety, Schwartz was sentenced to 90 days in a Los Angeles County jail for drunk driving and battery of a police officer. During that period, which she describes as a "chronic state of blackout," she inflicted unfathomable damage on her friends, her husband, and her teenage daughter – to say nothing of herself. She lost job after job; her

family was forced to move away; her friends left, unable to help. Schwartz found herself completely alone with the mental illness that accompanies alcoholism.

Century Regional Detention Facility, known in the vernacular as Lynwood, is considered one of the roughest jails in the United States, “each minute an entire anthem to human depravity,” she writes. Incarceration might have ruined her, if not for the books that comforted her and the stories her fellow inmates shared with her in her jail cell. *The Lost Chapters* recounts the visceral experience of the daily humiliations she and her fellow inmates endured. It delves deep into the nature of shame and rage, but also how love can be an instrument of change and redemption. She reveals learning how to banish her shame, to use guilt for good, level her grief, and how she found her lost joy in prison - the unlikely of places.

“We are thrilled to bring Leslie Schwartz’s story to JWT,” says Ronda Spinak, JWT’s Artistic Director. “*The Lost Chapters* tells of her terrible spiral into hopelessness but also of the stories that restored her. When Leslie was sentenced, she was actually teaching a writing class at JWT. That she was able to pick up the class where she left off and to write this book after such a harrowing experience is profoundly moving.”

Meghan Daum, author of *The Unspeakable*, says, “What an incredible book. Leslie Schwartz’s story would be a page turner on its own, but she’s also crafted an elegant tribute to literature and all its transcendent powers. *The Lost Chapters* is honest, erudite, and infused with just the right proportions of shock, awe, humor and grace. I read it with unceasing admiration and haven’t stopped thinking about it since.”

Janet Fitch, author of *White Oleander* and *The Revolution of Marina M.* called it, “a real life-changer of a book. This is time more than served, it’s time redeemed.”

Schwartz will be in conversation with JWT dramaturge and author, Lisa Rosenbaum, for a compelling morning of talk, book signing, and a light brunch at The Braid, 2912 Colorado Ave. #102, from 10am to noon, on Sunday, August 26th. For more information, visit: www.jewishwomenstheatre.org and click on “Buy Tickets.”

JWT, voted “Best Live Theatre on the Westside” by The Argonaut, stages original dramatic performances, contemporary art exhibits, classes, and other events showcasing the diverse community of writers, artists and creators who celebrate Jewish life, one story at a time. Now in its 11th year, learn more about JWT at www.jewishwomenstheatre.org.

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